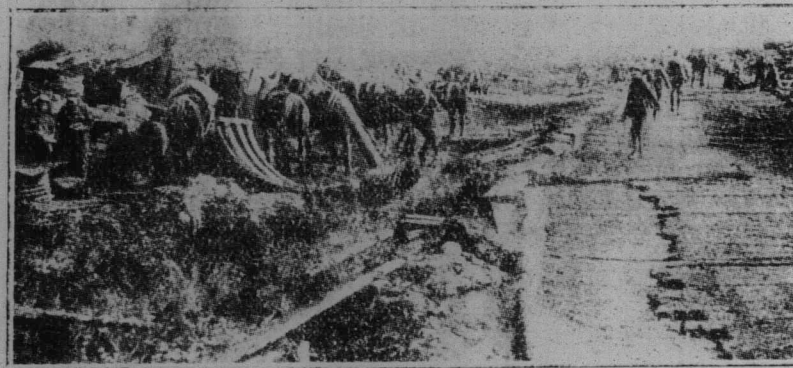


The Battle Fields of France, Cont'd

ing through the British left wing and marching to the sea, and that also failed.

About 550,000 Germans were massed between La-Bassee and Armentieres. In this offensive our regiment was stationed near Armentieres where General Freyburg, V.C., D.S.O., &c., after action issued orders that if the Germans attacked, Newfoundlanders should open the fight, and if the British withdrew, the Newfoundlanders were to cover the withdrawal. An order that proves how valiant our boys were.

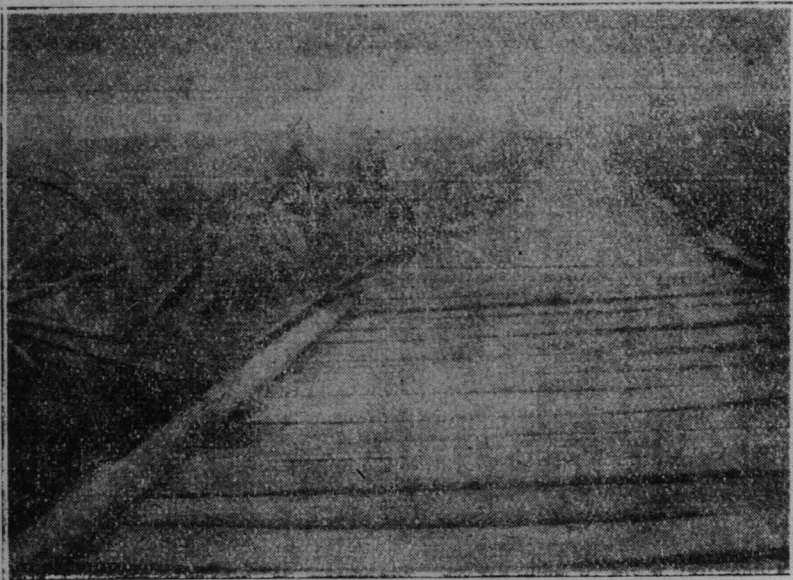
The first battle lasted eight days and is known as the battle of the Flanders Hills. They took in eight days what it took the British five months to capture in the offensive of August-November, 1917. The accompanying diagram shows what the British lines recovered at the close of the 1917 offensive, and the German gains during the April 1918 drive. The first smash was in the sector held by Portuguese troops between Bois-Grenier and Neuve-Chapelle, where the Portuguese fled like sheep before wolves. After eight days the British, who had been aided



A plank road near Ypres.

by French troops, rushed to the sector and completely stopped the German drive but not before they had reached the forests of Nieppe and the chain of the Flanders Hill.

After a calm of five days fresh divisions of 100,000 picked German troops were brought up from Alsace-Lorraine, and the second phase of the Battle of Flanders Hill began. Mont Kemmel was captured from the French after a fierce hand to hand encounter. After four days the Allies had broken this drive and calm reigned again for only three days, when the third and last effort by 120,000 fresh troops was made to capture the Hills. They made some progress in the morning, but the French counter-attacked



A plank road in Flanders over which our boys marched—each plank cost 55.

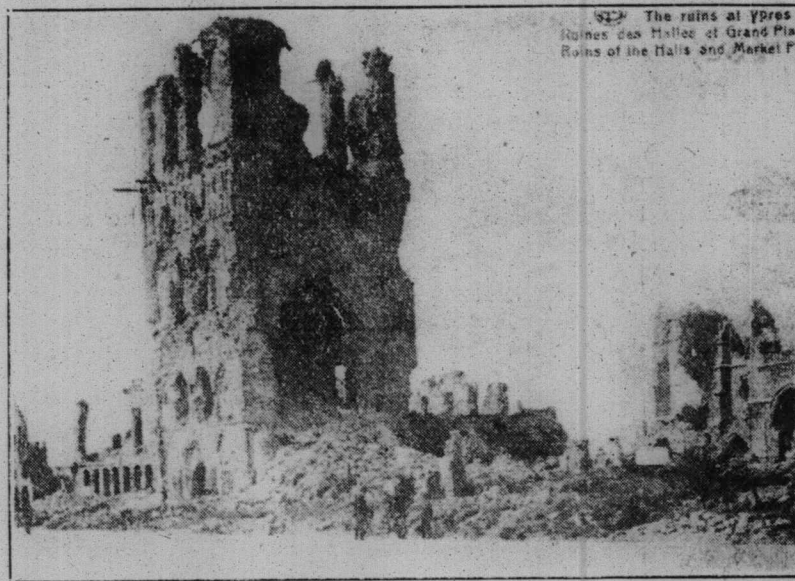
in the evening and drove them back where they started in the morning. That day's fighting exhausted them and they did not renew the attack. They had destroyed Ypres but could not secure the ruined city.

On July 19th, 1918, the British attacked the German lines near the Lys, securing two and a half miles, and the British offensive grew until on September 2nd the Hindenburg Line was passed and the road open to Cambrai. On September 26th the British-Belgians marched against the army of Von Arnim and the Germans were soon in full retreat in the open field which continued until the Armistice was signed, November 11th.



The remains of horses on the battlefield.

A diagram accompanying shows the progress made from September 28th to November 31st. Note a cross, near Neuve Eglise where Capt. Charlie Strong was wounded in the British offensive of the previous fall; Floegsteert, the Belgian frontier; and a mark near Passchendaele, which is Ledeghem, where our regiment started October 14th. It was near here that Lance Corporal Christian was wounded and brave Ricketts won the V.C. Trace the narrow space outlined to Vichte, in this vicinity the last fighting of the Newfoundland Regiment in the war took place. It was at Vichte that thirteen of our



The ruins of Cloth Hall, Ypres.

boys met their death sleeping in a barn which was set afire by four German shells, striking at the same spot within a couple of minutes. (See photo of the remains of the barn).

I have roughly explained the closing events of the war where they concerned that splendid Caribou Regiment that proved "Better than the best." I hope some father or mother in some isolated outpost will be able to gather some information about where their boy fought and fell, if so, I am well repaid for the time spent in penning those unpretentious lines.

From Ypres—pronounced Yeep—we motored to Passchendaele—pronounced Pashendale—and rested at Vindictive Cross Roads which many of our lads will well remember. Every building in this section is level with the ground. Some of the most violent and furious fighting of the war took place on the high land around Passchendaele.



Sergt. Ricketts, V.C.

A monument will be erected near the mark at Zonnebeke, at a spot near Koeberg Bridge (see photo), in memory of all our boys who fell in Flanders.

The Australians have built an enormous mound and erected on it a splendid monument in memory of their comrades who fell in this locality during the battle of Ypres.

We passed through Menin and on to Ledeghem and visited the spot near the station where our Regiment started in pursuit of the retreating Germans on October 14th. We followed across the fields and roads to Courtrai where we lodged that night. Courtrai was not injured much and conditions in this town have become normal; one would not think that it was the scene of fierce fighting.

We had just passed along the field which has made Newfoundland proud—where Sergt. Ricketts won the coveted and highly valued Victoria Cross. Well done,

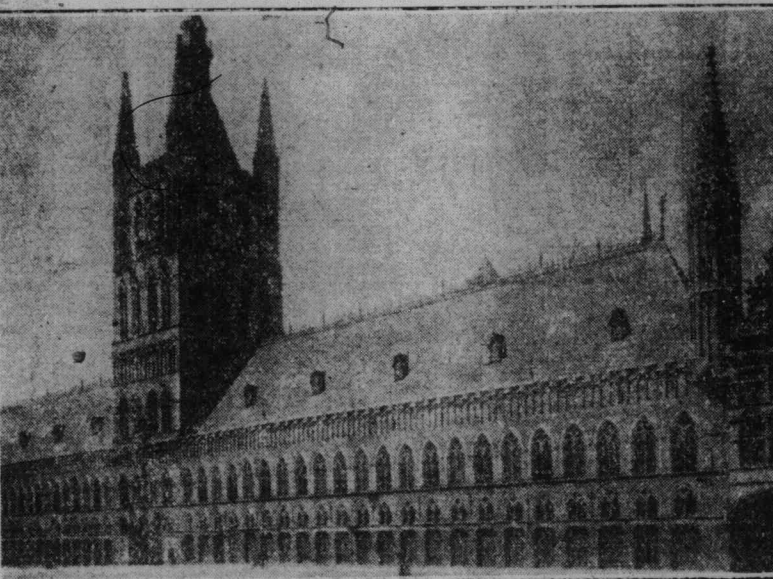


The Allies' Victory offensive, August-October, 1918.

brave Ricketts! Your valor was proven and the coveted prize won for as deserving a deed as it was ever bestowed for. I wonder if Captain Frost, who knows every detail of the brave deed, could be induced to write a short article to the press giving the full particulars. It was Capt. Frost that claimed the honor for brave Ricketts. Twice before two of our hero lads had been recommended for the V.C. but because of the O.C.'s indifference they were turned down. One was Lieut. Mifflin of Bonavista.

We saw where our boys had been billeted at Courtrai. We saw the C.O. quarters. Our lads had a short rest at Courtrai.

The next morning we motored to Vichte. It was near here that Dr. Rendell's son Herbert and Frank Burt fell. We passed Hurlbeke where our boys crossed the River Lys in pursuit of the fast fleeing Germans. At Vichte we visited the Military Cemetery where eleven of our brave boys rest until that morn. They were killed about the 25th, burial took place 26th. Three identified bodies and three unknown bodies rest here, who were taken from the debris of the barn at Amez farm about half a mile distant. At Vichte Cemetery rest Cpl. L. Crotty, 3933; Pte. W. A. Dean of Freshwater, 949; Pte. W. King, 2577; Sgt. Newton, 3585; Pte. M. O'Brien, 2968; Sgt. Monahan, 2244, (I



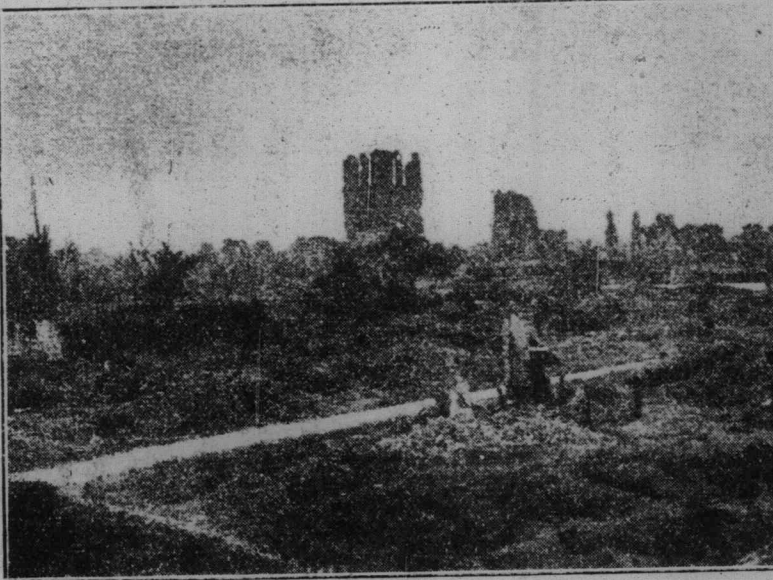
Cloth Hall, Ypres.

think he resided at South Side); Pte. L. J. Webb, 2675; Pte. J. O. Bourke, 3345.

We recovered the barrels of three rifles and a bayonet from the barn referred to. The bayonet number is 920. Mr. Bryant found it at Amez barn in the ruins. Anyone may see the rifles and bayonet at the Marine and Fisheries Department.

I expect Pte. W. Dean, whose sister Mrs. Elizabeth Summers resides at Freshwater, B.D.V., was one of the survivors of Beaumont Hamel as his number would indicate. If so he passed through the war from the first action our regiment fought in France up to the closing action, for the last fighting done by our regiment took place at In-goyhen, about two or three miles from Vichte. We proceeded to Ghent, Alost, and reached Brussels at dark.

The next morning we discovered that it would cause considerable delay if we decided to proceed to Italy via Switzerland, and we resolved to return to Paris by train next morning and see what chances there were to get forward to Italy. We therefore spent the day at Waterloo



Ypres after the War.

and were well repaid for taking the trouble. The battle field is three miles from Waterloo Village and is situated at Mont St. Jean. At Mont St. Jean a huge mound has been constructed by the British-Dutch Government, whose troops fought under Wellington at Waterloo. The mound is surmounted by a huge Bronze Lion weighing 70,000 lbs. The mound is shown in the accompanying photo. It is erected on the spot covering the right centre of Wellington's army and where the Duke of Orange was wounded. Near the mound is a building erected eight years ago, which contains a panorama of the battle showing the snellest details of that battle at seven o'clock that evening.

The battle opened at about 11.30 a.m. and the French fled about 2.0 p.m. The painting is by a French artist who, assisted by eight others completed the panorama in four years. It is worth seeing. It is one of the most wonderful paintings I ever saw and it is amazingly astonishing in its arrangement which exactly produces the Battle of Waterloo, taking in the country, for miles, showing Napoleon on his white charger and the great Wellington on foot not far from the Hougoumont Farm.

We walked over the field, saw the farm houses made immortal on that day, photos of which will accompany those notes. We spent quite a time at Hougoumont Farm. The orchard yard with its brick wall fence, showing the openings made that day for firing the flint lock muskets, are still to be seen. The well in the chateau yard, where 300 dead bodies were cast, is still to be seen.

(See photo—I am standing in the photo over this memorable well).

The little chapel—all that remains of the chateau

which was burnt on the evening of the battle—is still intact. In this chapel the wounded were carried and cared for. The farm house still looks as it did in 1815. It is indeed a memorable place and we—Major Nangle, Murray, Sellars, Bryant and the writer—considered it a privilege to visit the field and Hougoumont Farm.



Beuzincourt Cemetery, on the Somme.

The battle was fought on an area about ten times larger than Beaumont Hamel field. The Allied troops engaged under Wellington amounted to 67,000—20,000 of whom did very little fighting, being Dutch-Belgians, and 156 guns. Wellington's losses, in killed, wounded and missing, were 15,000. About 25,000 Prussians took part in the war during the last two closing hours and 15,000 arrived about eight o'clock. The Prussians put in their work in pushing the enemy while in retreat. The Prussian losses in killed, wounded and missing was 6,000. The Prussians had 64 guns in use during the two closing hours of the fight, on the left wing of the battle field. Forty guns arrived on the field at about eight o'clock in the evening. Napoleon's army on the field consisted of 72,000 men and 246 guns. The French losses were greater than the Allies. Wellington captured 122 guns, exclusive of the Prussian capture in pursuit. The French were crushingly defeated and



La Fosse Farm—Newfoundland Battalion Headquarters.

Napoleon fled for Paris, thence to the sea and surrendered to the British and was sent to St. Helena.

Napoleon's tomb at Paris is one of the wonders of Europe. No other man has such a tomb, and it is not likely any man in the future will be given a similar resting place. I visited it during my stay at Paris and thousands of French people passed the tomb that evening. The tomb is without a doubt an inspiration to the French and the memory of Napoleon is an incentive to all French men to do their duty. He is generally regarded as one of the most wonderful men ever born. French history without Napoleon would indeed be barren and empty, but Napoleon history in itself is sufficiently inspiring for any nation. He died from consumption of the bowels at the age of 52. His one colossal blunder was his unbridled ambition to dominate the world, and it proved his undoing, just as a similar ambition has just brought destruction upon Germany who is responsible for the destruction which has overcome Austria-Hungary.

I left the battle field of Mont St. Jean with mingled feelings of pleasure and regret, for there Wellington laid



Ypres before the War.

low the ambitions of a man who was a curse and not a blessing to humanity. Yet I regretted that a man of Napoleon's undoubted talents as a warrior, statesman and administrator, did not use those talents to build up a strong France which would have been a lantern to the wavering feet of the nations of Europe, and thereby a blessing to humanity. There is a limit to every ambition and woe to those who are too busy or too haughty to recognize proper limitations. Wellington and Napoleon were born the same year; both rose from the common ranks; both were great men and left their imprint upon the sands of time.

(Continued on Page 7)